Police vol 17.

PROPOSALS

TO THE

LEGISLATURE

FOR

Numbering the PEOPLE.

CONTAINING

Some Obſervations on the POPULATION of GREAT BRITAIN, and a Sketch of the ADVANTAGES that would probably accrue from an exact Knowledge of its preſent State.

Veut-on ſavoir au juſte ce qu'on a perdu; quel accroiſſement ou dècroiſſement éprouve ſucceſſivement un etat? Il faut dénombrer de tems en tems, pour former des jugemens de comparaiſon, & pour cela il ſeroit très bien ce me ſemble d'avoir des epoques fixes.

MEMOIRES DE BERNE.

By the AUTHOR of the
TOURS THROUGH ENGLAND.

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PROPOSALS
TO THE
LEGISLATURE,
For NUMBERING the
PEOPLE.

MEN who, by birth, rank, or fortune, poſſeſs the ſplendid advantage of a voice in the greateſt deliberations of their country, have conſtantly an opportunity (not the leaſt important of ſuch a ſituation) of propoſing their ideas on any ſubject, for the conſideration of their fellow-ſenators; ſo that the private opinion of a ſingle man may become the ſource of laws of the greateſt conſequence to the whole kingdom.

FOR other men, unpoſſeſſed of ſuch eminent privileges, but wiſhing to be uſeful, there remains alone the humbler office of venturing hints to thoſe whoſe ſituation allows more active exertions.

THE man who attends to, and leiſurely reflects on national objects, muſt be of very mean abilities never to form ideas, that riſe in conſequence above the fleeting inſignificance of converſation; but to whatever importance his conceptions may attain, they are of little publick value, if forgotten as ſoon as formed. He who thinks that he has plans to ſketch, propoſitions to offer, or notions to ſtart, which may be ſerviceable to the community, owes them to that community; nor ſhould *he* be condemned for errors who means well. Ten projectors had better be ridiculed for viſionary enthuſiaſts,

ſiaſts, than one uſeful project buried in oblivion.

It is under the influence of this opinion, that I now offer to the conſideration of the Legiſlature, a few obſervations on the ſuppoſed propriety of a meaſure, which has been more than once thought of, but never carried into execution in this kingdom; THE NUMBERING THE PEOPLE.

As I know not of any writer having profeſſedly treated of this ſubject, it is natural to ſuppoſe, that it has not been ſo fully conſidered as its great importance really demands.

Let me previouſly hint to the reader, that he is not to expect ſo fertile a ſubject, to be here fully examined, and traced

through all its conſequences, an under-taking which would prove too extenſive, and call for a volume, rather than a fugitive eſſay; I mean but to give a ſketch of this matter, and leave the perfecting the deſign to thoſe whoſe attention to it can alone command beneficial conſequences.

I SHALL not enter into any general reflections on the importance of *Population*, though it is a ſubject too indiſcriminately underſtood, but confine myſelf to the advantages, which I conceive would flow from a minute and accurate knowledge of its preſent ſtate.

AT preſent we are very much in the dark on this head; our numbers are gueſſed every day; but from ſuch imperfect authority, and with ſuch great variations, that no ſure dependance is to be placed

placed in ſuch random ideas. Some aſſert that population declines; that we have loſt a million and a half ſince the Revolution; and that the decreaſe now continues ſtrong; others are of a direct contrary opinion.—Deciſive certainty remains with neither. But I ſhall juſt remark, that the calculations drawn up from the number of houſes are, in all probability, fallacious: that they are mere *gueſſes* we well know; for by what rule is the number of ſouls *per* houſe to be determined? How is the medium to be found out between the palace, and the cot? What allowances are made for hoſpitals, priſons, ſchools, colleges, ſhips, *&c.* lumping them at four, five, or ſix, *per* houſe? —Is this a method that can aſcertain the average of numbers ſo vaſtly different? It is nonſenſe and pretence to ſuppoſe it. Beſides, how are we to know that the

number

number *per* houſe is always the ſame? So that the increaſe or decreaſe could not be diſcovered, even if the number of houſes at a given time determined that of the people.

An accidental agreement between the common ſuppoſition *per* houſe, and the real numbers in any ſmall diſtrict, cannot, with accuracy, be extended to the kingdom at large.

Nor ſhould it be forgotten, that Adminiſtration is as ignorant of the point as other people: the miniſters of ſtate have no better opportunities of *accurate* information in this very important affair, than the loweſt clerk in office. This indeed may be gathered from the diverſity of opinion; for, out of ſix firſt lords of the treaſury, three will aſſert that the people

people are increaſing, and as many that the numbers decline. If therefore the knowledge would be uſeful, the expediency of gaining it is not ſuperſeded by any poſſeſſed at preſent.

THE information to be wiſhed for, I apprehend not to conſiſt merely in the total number of ſouls; but a diviſion of them into various claſſes: it would be proper, for inſtance, to diſtinguiſh the number relative to that of families, and alſo to that of houſes.

GENERAL diviſions to be made of counties; and alſo of towns and cities.

EVERY man, or family (if he has one) to be diſtinguiſhed by his buſineſs or profeſſion; and if belonging to any manufacture or branch of commerce, to be

minuted

minuted under the head of ſuch manufacture or trade.

SHOPKEEPERS to be diſtinguiſhed by the goods they ſell.

PARISH poor that are *regularly chargeable*, to be minuted ſeparately.

PARISH poor that are only chargeable at times, to be noted alſo.

VAGRANTS (if their numbers could be gained) likewiſe to be diſtinct.

LANDLORDS not included in other claſſes, to form one by themſelves; which would admit of ſub-diviſions.

FOR the ſake of perſpicuity, no perſon ſhould be ranked in more than one claſs; for inſtance, a *labourer in huſbandry* might

be chargeable to the pariſh; in which caſe R. C. prefixed to his name, ſignifying *regularly chargeable*, would enable any one afterwards to caſt up the numbers:—and other diſtinctions, in the ſame manner.

THE numbers to be taken regularly every five years, unleſs a change of national circumſtances called for variations; of which more hereafter.

I HAVE ſketched theſe hints, merely as an explanation of the idea, and not as a complete table of what ought to be done.

RESPECTING the advantages which would attend ſo perfect a knowledge of the population of *Great Britain*, a very little attention will be ſufficient to comprehend many great and cogent ones.

THE Legiſlature would at once diſcover the diſtribution of the people, into the three great claſſes of agriculture, manufactures, and commerce.—And alſo diſcern the number of another ſet, which may be called the idle conſumers. The local diſtribution of theſe claſſes would furniſh information of a very important nature.

BY comparing them with other local circumſtances, ſuch as cuſtoms, exciſes, *&c.* proportions would be found that might offer leſſons of conſequence.

THE effect of theſe firſt great employments on population, would be ſeen at a ſingle glance, by exhibiting the numbers maintained by each: and every ſub-diviſion clearly underſtood in the ſame manner.

THE

THE local columns would ſhew the degree of influence of manufactures on population, in a variety of inſtances;—and alſo in what degree they are attended with diſadvantages.

A STATESMAN poſſeſſing ſuch a table, and knowing, at the ſame time, other circumſtances of great import, ſuch as, the average rental of all counties and diſtricts, the rates, tythes, taxes, products, *&c.* would at once be able to decide the degree of proſperity enjoyed by the people; and what is of more conſequence, would comprehend at once the cauſes of ſuch proſperity, the means of advancing it, and of preventing a decline. Will any ſtateſman aſſert that he underſtands theſe objects at preſent? He may give a ſenſible gueſs; but there is a world of

difference between the ſhrewdeſt ſuſpicion, and plain certainty.

MANY circumſtances in the diſtribution of the claſſes, would clearly explain the degree of advantage or diſadvantage that would probably attend the taking a large number of hands from the maſs of uſual profeſſions; whether for the execution of great publick works, or for raiſing armies, and manning navies: If any, or all the claſſes abounded with ſupernumeraries, this would be a great advantage. I need not hint the propriety of conſidering in ſuch inquiries, collateral circumſtances, relative to the ſtate of the three great diviſions.

NOR would the advantage be trivial, of knowing the ſum total of the people; this clearly appears from *ſuppoſed* numbers

bers being made a matter of importance; random ideas become the parent of great national meaſures, inſtead of that deciſive certainty which ſhould alone be followed.

I READ the other day in a printed ſpeech the following paragraph: "When "I compare the numbers of our people, "eſtimated highly at ſeven millions, "with the population of *France* and "*Spain*, uſually computed at twenty-five "millions, I ſee a clear ſelf-evident im-"poſſibility for this country to contend "with the united power of the houſe of "*Bourbon*, merely upon the ſtrength of "its own reſources, *&c.*"

WHETHER this was the real ſpeech of a great ſtateſman, is not here a matter of conſequence; I quote it merely as an inſtance

inſtance that miniſters and great men *may* think thus:—that many of them do frame their conduct from their ideas of national population, cannot be doubted.

HERE we find *an idea* of population, produced as a motive which ſhould lead us to the greateſt variations of political conduct. *Becauſe* we have only ſeven millions, we muſt do ſo and ſo.—— Now, let me aſk any perſon, if a certain fact would not be greatly more ſatisfactory, when intereſts of ſuch mighty importance are depending, than an imaginary number?

IF the meaſure of population becomes the meaſure of national conduct, the ſame conſequences cannot be deduced from numbers largely different. Is the ſame concluſion to be drawn from nine

as

as from ſeven millions? From twelve as from eight? Or muſt the balance of population of two kingdoms preceding a war, be ſtruck with as great accuracy as the debtor and creditor pages of a merchant's books?

THIS being a point peculiarly dependent on the preſent ſubject, I ſhall beg leave to make a few obſervations.

SUCCESS in war depends not on population. This is not the random aſſertion of a private individual: all hiſtory, all experience, is concentered in one focus, to prove the truth of it. If you caſt up (as well as general ideas will allow) the population of the ſeveral kingdoms and ſtates, entering on a war, and from the balance, even when it ſeems prepoſterouſly great, venture to predict the event of the quarrel,

quarrel, I anſwer, that in general, it will prove directly the reverſe; it has been ſo in modern as well as in antient wars. What had population to do with the face of military affairs during the late war? From *Petersburgh* to *Liſbon*, uninterrupted ſucceſs attended the ſmalleſt numbers. In *Lewis* XIV's ſucceſsful wars, population was often againſt him. Was it population that turned the ſcale under the duke of *Marlborough?* or great perſonal abilities, aided by vaſt riches? Where were numbers aſleep, when the *Dutch* made ſo long a ſtand, firſt againſt *Philip*, and then againſt *Lewis* XIV?

But, ſuppoſing the caſe—that ſeveral wars had happened, in which ſucceſs attended the moſt numerous people, are we to conclude, that it *therefore* attended them? Are mere numbers the important

point? Thoſe who anſwer in the affirmative, ſhould not forget the proportions between the claſſes of a people:—the balance of idle and induſtrious hands:—the ſupernumeraries which can be afforded without danger to the national induſtry; the number of ſailors maintained by commerce;—but above all, the means of paying men when they are to be gained. Suppoſe that *France* has twenty millions of ſouls, and that *Britain* has ſeven millions? What does this decide? Nothing. Suppoſe *France* has a clear revenue applicable to the expences of the ſtate of four millions ſterling—and *Britain* one of ſix millions; What does this decide?——Every thing *.

* As far as calculation reaches—the balance of great abilities will overturn all others; and has nothing

BUT, without ſtating cauſes that are in ſtrong oppoſition, we may at leaſt venture to conclude, that one nation being more numerous than another, by no means decides a ſuperiority of force.

A NATION may certainly be more powerful with ten millions of ſouls than with twelve.——You may fight off five hundred thouſand men from a people of ten millions, and do leſs injury to the ſtate, than deſtroying four hundred thouſand would effect on a people of fifteen millions. The national forces by ſea and land, of the two nations in the laſt

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nothing to do with the preſent inquiry. Inſular ſituation is the ſtrongeſt objection in the world; but I wave it, as the conſideration would lead me from the point in queſtion.

war,

war, were perhaps nearly equal.—But what an amazing difference in the internal ſtate of the two kingdoms! I do not confine myſelf to wealth, eaſe, ſucceſs, *&c.* but to the real *want of people:* In *France* the ſoil, in vaſt tracts, was left uncultivated; the whole aggregate of induſtry at a ſtand; agriculture, manufactures, and commerce in equal ruin. What was the ſtate of this country?—Of ſo little avail is the great ſum total of a nation's numbers.

In a ſucceſsful war the event was the ſame. Conſider the ſtate of that kingdom in 1748, and 1749. Victories and defeats have the ſame effect; their population is but a ſignal of the millions to be ſtarved.

But does not all this point out the propriety of numbering the people;—

that falſe ideas, or falſe concluſions, drawn from true ideas of this important matter, ſhould not miſlead thoſe who have the honour of being intruſted with the helm of government? It cannot be that the ſame conduct ſhould be applicable to all the poſſible numbers in which the totals may be found. SEVEN MILLIONS ſimply mentioned, without any explanation of attendant circumſtances, have been mentioned as a number ſo few, that continental connections and wars muſt be had *in ſuccour*.

SUPPOSE the number proves ten millions, attended by *various* circumſtances, will the ſame reaſoning hold good?

IF the reply is always the ſame, I anſwer, that then population has no more

more to do in the caſe, than the colour of the miniſter's coat.

But the advantages which would inevitably attend taking the numbers of the people, will fully explain all theſe circumſtances. The increaſe or decreaſe of the various claſſes of the people, would ſhew Adminiſtration the conſequences of all ſorts of meaſures; and prove in the cleareſt manner, how far *power* depended on *indiſcriminate population*. It would ſhew the importance of every claſs; and point out the neceſſity and the means of increaſing the moſt valuable. Ill-founded fears of a more numerous enemy on one hand; or too ſecure ideas of ſelf-ſafety, on the other, would at once be baniſhed: certainty in theſe truly important points, would be the thermometer of the ſtate. It would

guard us from great and dangerous errors, and point the road to ſure proſperity.

LET us, for a moment, ſuppoſe, that the people had in this manner been numbered, in the years 1739, 1744, 1749, 1754, 1759, and 1764: by comparing 1739, 1744, and 1749, together, one a year of peace before the war, one a year of war, and the other a year of peace after the war, the effect would have been fully known. By comparing 1754 with 1759, and 1764, in the ſame manner, the effect of the late war, which was of ſuch unbounded extent, and in which we raiſed ſuch an amazing number of men, would alſo be clearly ſeen. It would appear, from what claſſes men were raiſed for the ſervice of the publick; whether thoſe claſſes ſuffered in population from

ſuch

ſuch drains; and by conſidering with ſome attention, the taxes, the conſumption, and the amount of induſtry in exciſes, exports, *&c.* it might poſſibly be found, that certain claſſes and local diviſions furniſhed a great proportion of the men, at the ſame time that they ſuffered in no one particular. I ſtate this ſuppoſition, becauſe I believe that it was really the caſe.

It would further appear, how much the people in general decreaſed, from the loſs of four or five hundred thouſand ſoldiers and ſailors. It would be very curious to ſee a great conſumption of men, and yet no decreaſe. It would be too hardy boldly to aſſert, that this muſt be the caſe; but I have no conception that half a million of men ſo taken off, *in a ſucceſsful war*, would decreaſe the people

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in the ſame proportion; and for theſe reaſons, among many others.

DECREASING the idle, increaſes the induſtrious.

DECREASING the induſtrious has the immediate effect of repairing the loſs, and, perhaps, more than doing it by the increaſe of demand.

IT might alſo very probably have appeared, that in the ten years from 1754, to 1764, the nation, inſtead of loſing people, gained in numbers. I have in my own mind, little doubt of its being the caſe; but how important would it be to decide the point! If this kingdom was able, during nine years of war, to keep three or four hundred thouſand men in pay, raiſe ſuch immenſe ſums of money,

add

add four millions a-year to her taxes; and, at the ſame time, increaſe in wealth and income, without ſuffering in population; will not ſuch a fact be pregnant with important concluſions? Not, however, that I lay a ſtreſs on the point of indiſcriminate population; ſhe might decreaſe in people, and yet make great advances in every point of real conſequence. Taking from the number of the non-induſtrious is an advantage; you muſt examine the claſſes of the liſt, before you are to decide whether population has eſſentially ſuffered.

For ſentiments of this ſort, I have been abuſed more than once, as an *enemy to the poor*, with all that common-place rubbiſh of vulgar ideas, which blackens a man as an enemy to humanity, becauſe he ſees no uſe in that ſort of population,

which increaſes only to be hanged or ſtarved.

To ſhew by an inſtance, that population may decreaſe without the intereſts of population ſuffering, let us ſuppoſe, that in one night, five hundred thouſand beggars, vagabonds, pick-pockets, and idle people were to diſappear; if you then took a freſh account of your total numbers, you would find a decreaſe of half a million; but who will be hardy enough to aſſert, that we ſhould in conſequence be a weaker, a poorer, or a leſs flouriſhing people? I only mean from hence, that ideas of profit or loſs, relative to population, ſhould never be general, but depend on the claſſes which decreaſe.

PERHAPS the reſult of executing ſuch a Plan, would be proving to Adminiſtration,

tion, that the power of the kingdom was (as far as concerns population) fully equal to that of its neighbours; while a contrary ſuppoſition, is a plea for national meaſures, peculiarly ariſing from the circumſtance; and, at the ſame time, by no means of acknowledged propriety.—Surely a certainty of the contrary fact, muſt lead to different ideas: and therein tend to the moſt beneficial conſequences.

But if, contrary to expectation, the population of the kingdom was found really and efficiently to decline; ſtill I beg leave to obſerve, that a clear knowledge of the ſtate, nature, cauſe, and degree of the evil, muſt be the firſt ſtep to a remedy. By the renewal of the luſtrum every five years, all this would appear: it would be ſeen in what claſſes was the greateſt loſs, and in what

places; by which means the cauſe would be diſcovered. A very attentive eye ſhould be kept on the ſtate of agriculture, manufactures, commerce, and the levy of publick taxes, that the exact proportion of the evil might be known; and thoſe branches of induſtry which ſuffered, and were the cauſe, pointed out and clearly aſcertained. Let any perſon impartially declare, if they think that ſuch a quick and accurate knowledge of the diſeaſe, would not greatly accelerate the cure? Meaſures might be taken that bore immediately on the point—that yielded effectual aſſiſtance, far different from the uſual progreſs of affairs, which move on in utter ignorance of the caſe.

It would be endleſs to endeavour to ſketch all the advantages which would, in

in all human probability, flow from executing the meaſure I now propoſe.—As theſe looſe papers are not deſigned as a regular delineation of every conſequence, but rather as hints for others to extend, there is the leſs neceſſity to dwell on them.

BUT I am aware of a queſtion, which may have been ſtarted by the reader, before he has proceeded thus far. *Suppoſing what you ſay is true, what is the application of it to the preſent ſtate of affairs? Why ſhould the people be numbered this year any more than the laſt, or the next?*

HAD the meaſure been executed long ago, and regularly continued in the manner I now propoſe, we ſhould at preſent have been in poſſeſſion of ſuch important knowledge of the ſubject, that

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all doubts and uncertainties would have been changed for conviction; and the meaſures requiſite for the advancement of the national proſperity now, perhaps, in execution. There never exiſted a reaſon againſt the meaſure; but its not having been executed, urges nothing againſt the propriety.

THAT it ſhould be a preſent object, rather than ſuffer any delay, there are many very cogent reaſons. The nation is at preſent at peace; but ſeemingly on the eve of a war:—ſtay till the war is commenced, and you at once loſe one of thoſe capital advantages, of comparing three periods together; a year of peace before war——a year of war——and a year of peace after war. Whoever will attend to the nature and conſequences of the ſubject, muſt comprehend the juſtneſs

of this remark. It is probably the moſt important point in the whole meaſure, to be able to compare ſuch periods, with all the circumſtances that attend a war—of men raiſed and deſtroyed—money levied and expended—taxes increaſed—induſtry added to or diminiſhed, with numerous other changes that might affect population.

It is for this reaſon that I cannot but urge the great importance of executing the propoſed meaſure *immediately*—— before the preparations for war are farther advanced. I cannot conceive, that out of the numerous, moſt enlightened, and reſpectable body of nobility and gentry, who fill the two houſes of parliament, but that ſome will ſo far patronize theſe ideas, as to endeavour to do their country ſuch eſſential ſervice in pro-

promoting the meaſure. It is on every account to be wiſhed, that Adminiſtration may give it the *effectual* countenance. All parties ſhould unite, remembering that it is the buſineſs of the day; for if delayed but a ſingle ſeſſions, much of the utility, as I have already explained, may be loſt. —And if each ſet ſtays till their friends are in power, before they advance meaſures of this ſort; it is THE STATE that muſt inevitably be the ſufferer.

IT remains for me to reply to ſuch objections, as may probably be made to the propoſal; but previous to this, I ſhall take the liberty of remarking, that to all matters capable of yielding great benefit, numerous objections are to be formed: it belongs to pure inſipidity alone, ſafe in its inanity, to eſcape objections: never let it be imagined, that a meaſure

meaſure is falſe, becauſe many objections are ſtarted: you cannot command the leaſt benefit by an active meaſure, without incurring ſome evil: attend to the evil, but in proportion to the good.—Balance the account; and never reject a meaſure on the ſcore of objections, if they are overborne by the power of the advantages propoſed.

AMONG ſome very trivial remarks, one objection ſtrikes me, which has more of appearance than reality;—but is of that nature, which may eaſily catch weak minds. *If you gain the propoſed knowledge, your enemies will gain it too.*

GRANTING the utmoſt extent to which the idea can be carried—giving full force to all the evils that can hence ariſe—who will think of aſſerting that

they over-balance all the advantages of which I have been ſpeaking? Our enemies know the amount of the ſums we raiſe within the year—the extent of our borrowing—the difficulties we find—the premiums we pay;—in a word, every immediate fact that concerns the whole train of our money affairs.——This knowledge is to them ten times more dangerous than that of our population; which ſhould and muſt be conſidered more as a matter of police than war: the operations of the campaign are decided by money raiſed, and extent of credit. Their knowing theſe points is a caſe of importance, and they will and muſt know them; but as to your population, it is comparatively an object, to them, of no account, ſuppoſing all the while, that it decreaſed—but the probable event is the contrary. If we meet *France* with

with an hundred ſail of the line, and fourſcore thouſand land forces, of what conſequence is it to them, whether ſuch force proceed from four or from fourteen millions of people? As long as they are our enemies, they will exert every effort for our deſtruction, in the common courſe of war, without any conſideration of the ſum total of our people.

We are a more numerous people than the *Spaniards*; but of what conſequence is that? If their armies and navies are powerful, it is our buſineſs to deſtroy them; and where is the man abſurd enough to ſuppoſe, that it would make any change in our deſign and conduct of a war, to be informed that *Spain*, inſtead of containing eight millions of ſouls, really had but five?

With a ſingle city and a ſmall territory, riſen to wealth by commerce, the

caſe might be different; becauſe reſources both of men and money might be of no great extent; but ſuch reaſoning is never applicable to great nations.

We ſuppoſe *France* to contain ſixteen millions of ſouls; if you were informed with certainty, that the number was only twelve millions; would this decide any thing? Should we meet her in the field the weaker for this? But ſuppoſe, you heard with equal certainty, that ſhe ſtopt payment on her funds—that the plan of the year required ſixteen millions ſterling, and only ten could be raiſed?——What compariſon between theſe different pieces of information *?

Hence

* It may poſſibly be ſaid, how can population be thrown ſo much out of the queſtion, when the population of *France* certainly ſuffered ſo much from the

HENCE we find that each nation knows of the other, all that imports it to know: facts of real conſequence cannot

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the laſt war? I reply, that *France* did not ſuffer from the amount of ſoldiers raiſed, but from induſtry throughout the kingdom being at a ſtand; from loſs of trade, and weight of oppreſſive taxes. The recruiting an army of two hundred thouſand men, could be well borne by that kingdom; but if the employment of ſuch army leads into a field of expence, that adds ſo heavily to taxes, as to ſtarve the poor, and extinguiſh induſtry; then that army is deſtructive. Taxes in *England*, and taxes in *France*, are very different things; here they rather animate than deſtroy induſtry—being laid equally on conſumption;—but if we eaſed the rich of a conſiderable part of their ſhare, and threw the whole burthen on the induſtrious claſſes—particularly converting all the farmer's ſhare of the new load into a tythe, where do you ſuppoſe your population and your induſtry would be? And yet with all theſe evils, the diſtreſs of the *French* miniſtry, as of all others, is not for men but money: find but caſh, and men will follow to the end of time.

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be hid; in ſuch a caſe we ſhould not be ſurprized, if ſome perſons thought the ſhadow of more conſequence than the ſubſtance. The latter you cannot conceal; the former you may, and therein do much miſchief to yourſelf, without the leaſt recompence.

I CANNOT deviſe any other argument againſt the plan, even of ſeeming importance: but if the fertile genius of ſome men, whoſe *forte* lies in objecting, ſhould ſtart any that have eſcaped me, let it be conſidered, that a ſcheme of policy is not to be rejected, *becauſe* it is open to objections; for what plan was ever conceived, to which many might not be made? Were ſuch an one poſſible, it muſt certainly be one of thoſe water-gruel ideas, that can do no miſchief, becauſe they have not energy enough to do good.

RESPECTING the manner of taking the numbers, I apprehend the eaſieſt, and much the cheapeſt method would be, by the collectors of the land-tax, and window-light duties, annexed to warrants for executing their office, might be their directions in this buſineſs.

WHEN the particulars were reported to the treaſury, they ſhould be drawn up into a regular table, and publiſhed. This part of the plan is not immaterial; for the benefit reſulting from the execution, would probably be much greater if generally known, than if confined to the cabinet of the ſtateſman. Many facts might appear, from which very important deductions might be made, if attentively conſidered by ſtudious private men, whoſe leiſure and inclinations lead them to ſuch ſort of ſtudies; obſervations might

might be made which would point out methods of advancing induſtry and population, or preventing their decline. But who can ſuppoſe that people high in office (whatever their abilities), can have the leiſure neceſſary for attending properly to ſuch affairs? Hence therefore, the open liberal policy of making known to a free people their real ſtate and ſituation, ſhould be perſued, that every man may know the fact, and reaſon on its cauſes and conſequences.

THERE could not be a happier thought, than publiſhing regularly the average prices of corn, which began laſt *November*, by the authority of parliament. Thoſe who promoted that meaſure certainly thought, that the nation in general ſhould be poſſeſſed of the real truth—and who can diſpute the propriety

propriety of the idea? The publication of one fact, diſſipates a thouſand errors: the tables of the average prices of corn, have given the lie to all that nonſenſe and falſhood, with which fools or intereſted knaves, attempted to impoſe on the nation; perſuading us that *we are ruined*, becauſe the poor are ſtarved, by eating wheat at 5*s*. 6*d*. a buſhel.—— It is always important that the body of the people ſhould, in theſe points, have juſt ideas;—for general opinion muſt have an influence in forming laws among free nations. Whatever gives true information tends to enlighten them; I have therefore no doubt, but the regular publication of the price of corn will, at no diſtant period, occaſion a much better conduct in her corn trade, than this nation has of late purſued.

WHY not in the ſame manner inform us of the ſtate of population? The importance of it demands every attention; the general ignorance concerning it, leads to unbounded error.

THE greater number of valuable facts that are laid before a nation poſſeſſing the liberty of the preſs, the more will the people concern themſelves with the *politicks of things*, and neglect thoſe invidious ones, *the politicks of perſons*.

EVEN arbitrary governments ſometimes allow a freedom of writing on theſe ſorts of topics: domeſtic œconomy—the management of the finances—and the corn trade, were debated in *France* after the peace in 1763, with as great freedom as in almoſt any country in *Europe*; and theſe writers were afterwards ſilenced,

not on account of the corn affairs (as has been falſely aſſerted by one of thoſe croaking fools, who in this country are always crying out, that the nation is ruined) but from many ſevere reflections on the conduct of the miniſtry in the finances.

IT is for theſe and other reaſons, that I venture to mention the publication of the tables of population, as an eſſential part of the plan.

I SHALL not conclude this ſketch, without adding my wiſhes, that ſome candid members would make the numbering of the people, a matter of parliamentary debate. Fortunately it is a ſubject that can be obnoxious to no party —the merit of it therefore might be fairly decided, and the meaſure either

rejected, as improper, or executed, if found beneficial.

SINCE the preceding papers were drawn up, the *Spaniſh* ambaſſador has ſigned a Declaration which ſpeaks peace; from hence it may poſſibly be ſuppoſed, that there is no occaſion to execute this plan at preſent. But I beg leave to remark, that the very contrary concluſion ſhould be drawn—the beſt time is that of profound peace, for the ſake of comparing the numbers with thoſe of different periods. Hence the preſent moment ſhould not be neglected; for no one can venture to aſſert how long the preſent calm will laſt: and if this *declaration* ſhould happen to be no more than—deferring a war till the parties are better prepared, it is certainly proper to make uſe of the preſent

preſent peace which, on that ſuppoſition, cannot be laſting. From hence we may determine, that if the ſcheme is in itſelf proper, it ought immediately to be executed.

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